

FACTS ABOUT

Automotive Refrigerants: Retailer Requirements

Do-It-Yourself recharging of automobile air conditioners: A significant source of climate-changing gases

The refrigerant R134a is a highly potent greenhouse gas. A single 12-ounce container has the same climate-changing potential as all the emissions from 150 gallons of gasoline. California's regulation requires more control over R-134a and its containers to reduce unnecessary releases.

What is the purpose of this regulation?

The regulation reduces:

- Greenhouse gases emissions
- Waste going to landfills

Californians gain these benefits while still being able to charge their own vehicle's air conditioner.

Who must comply with the regulation?

The primary regulatory burden falls on manufacturers; however, those who sell automotive refrigerant products to consumers who recharge motor vehicle air conditioning systems must also comply.

What are the regulatory requirements for retailers?

Retailers must:

- Collect a \$10 deposit at the time of product sale to the consumer.
- Return deposits when containers are brought back within 90 days of purchase, with a sales receipt and undamaged (After 90 days retailers may refund a deposit at their discretion).
- Store returned containers in a manner compatible for transport to recycling facilities.
- Transfer unclaimed consumer deposits to respective manufacturer that were collected in the previous calendar year by April 1st.

Deposits paid to the distributor or manufacturer as part of the wholesale cost must be returned when used canisters are returned.

Manufacturers must coordinate with and assist retailers in transporting used containers to recycling facilities.

In addition, retailers must:

- Distribute the manufacturers' educational brochures to consumers.
- Display an 8 1/2" X 11" manufacturer-supplied placard next to the automotive-refrigerant products.

Finally, upon the request of the California Air Resources Board (ARB), retailers must report annual sales and returned-container data by March 1 of the following year. Report forms are available from the regulation's website at: www.arb.ca.gov/cc/hfc-mac/hfcdiy/hfcdiy.htm. Retailers must maintain records of invoices of the product bought and sold for a minimum of five years. California retailers must only sell small-container automotive-refrigerant products certified by the ARB. The certified products are listed in the executive orders posted on the regulation's website.

When does the regulation take effect?

The regulation took effect January 1, 2010 and only small-container refrigerant products certified by the ARB may be sold in California. Anyone selling small cans of R-134a for automotive air-conditioner replenishing must now meet all retailer requirements specified above.

What are the consequences of not complying?

Penalties may be assessed for any violation of this regulation pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 38580. Each day during any portion of which a violation occurs is a separate offense. Additionally, any violation of this subarticle may be enjoined pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 41513.

For more information

This regulation, fact sheets, executive orders for the certified products, and report forms are available at: www.arb.ca.gov/cc/hfc-mac/hfcdiy/hfcdiy.htm.

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